

'MAKE YOUR FEET A FEAST FOR THE EYE'

BY POLAIRE
THE UGLIEST BEAUTY
IN PARIS

I NEVER touch my own feet. I have three maids who do nothing else but care for them. One washes and massages them. One puts on my stockings and shoes. The third is the artist who under my direction embellishes them!

I put my feet if not before my face at least on equality with it. It is a contortionist phrase you say. Non, I mean it not literally but aesthetically, picturesquely.

Feet have too long been woman's most neglected possession. They are a basis of ornamentation which she has passed over. She has looked upon them merely as something to walk on. A clever American once recited me some verses by another clever American which reflect the inefficient idea. I memorized them:

My feet are very useful;
I put them on the ground.
Then all I do is steer them
And they take me all around.

—Gellert Burgess.

And feet are so much more than that! Listen: I tried experiments when the first gleam of my new philosophy came to me. I found that there are three points on which the eye rests, the face, the hands, the feet. A woman may have a beautiful face and beautiful hands, but if her shoes and stockings are untidy and shabby they kill the whole effect. On the other hand, a woman who is beautifully shod, beautifully stockinged, may be very ugly, may not be well dressed, may have rough hands—but her feet will more than carry her through.

One says of the first: "Beautiful face, beautiful dress, beautiful hands—but did you see her feet?" Of the second they say, "Yes, she's not pretty, but did you see her feet?" There is a world of difference between the two remarks. Why is the emphasis always laid upon the feet?

Why is it that no matter how well you are dressed, how well groomed, your measure of self-appraisal is always adjusted to the condition of your shoes? It is so—if everything else is all right and your shoes are shabby you feel shabby, and people think you shabby. But if you are threadbare everywhere else and have on a pair of nice, new, perfectly fitting ornamental shoes you feel well dressed and every one thinks you well dressed. Is it not so?

Why then has this important part of us been so neglected—looked upon simply as something useful which carry us around when we steer them?

The ancient women and the women of the East know better. It was the little tinkling feet of Salome that won Herod: "Your little feet will be like little white doves. They will be like little white flowers that dance upon the trees." The women of the East stain them artfully with henna; they hang chains of gold and jewels upon them. They are efficient women, those women of the East, and they know values—far, far better than we of the West. They realize their decorative value.

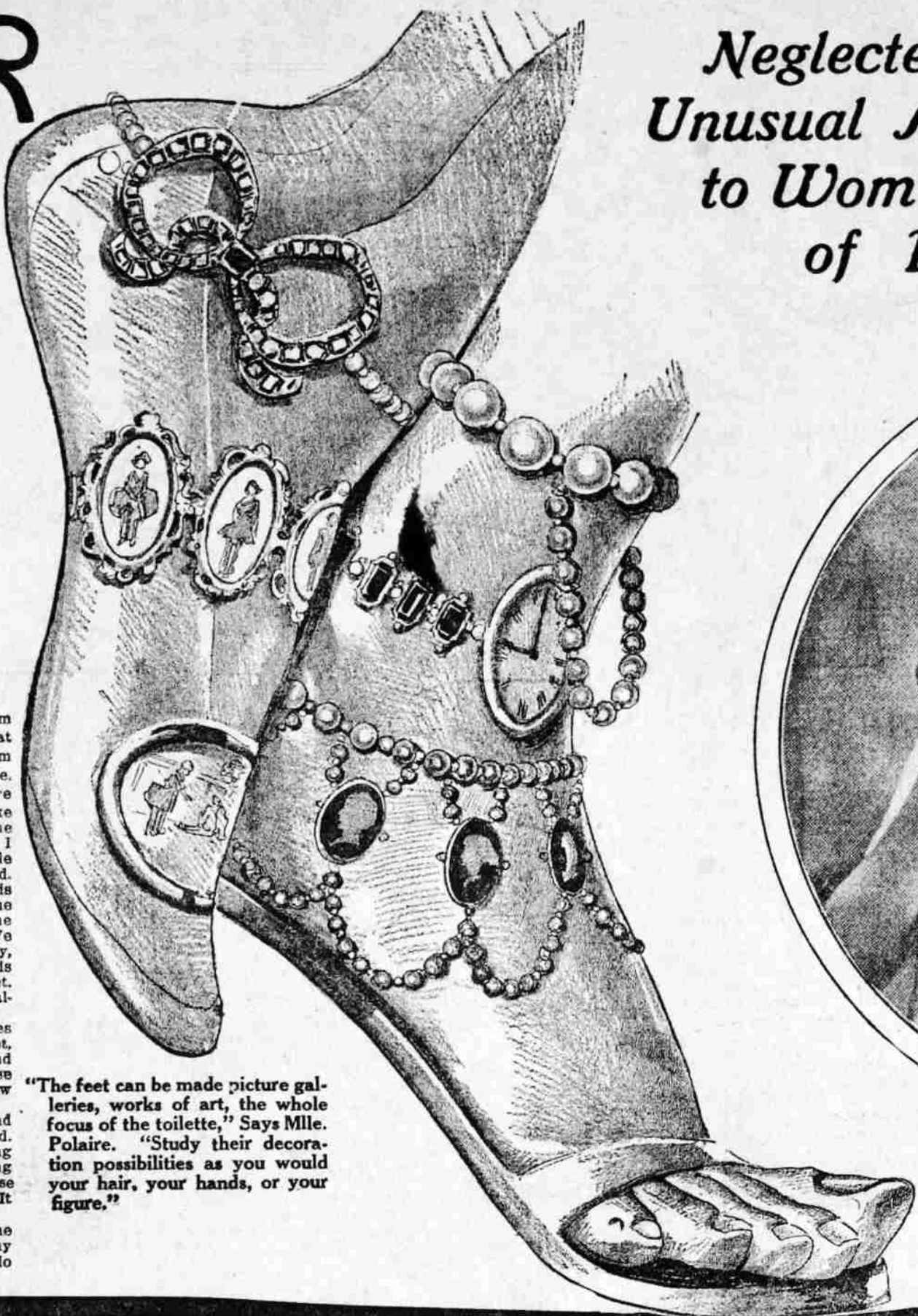
I have been called the ugliest

beauty in Paris. I am, and I am proud of it. I have a quality that the mere beauties have not. I am all they are and more. I fascinate. Mere beauty slips through the eye and off the mind, so softly—like feathers. But I do not slip so. The quality that is called beauty I have, but my ugliness is like little hooks that fasten it in the mind. I stick. They do not. And this is because I have studied the value of the unusual, the surprise, the unexpected. So it is of feet. We have gone our ways inefficiently, and every one has made up his mind at last to look over our feet. They say: "Oh, well, feet are always ugly. Let us forget them!"

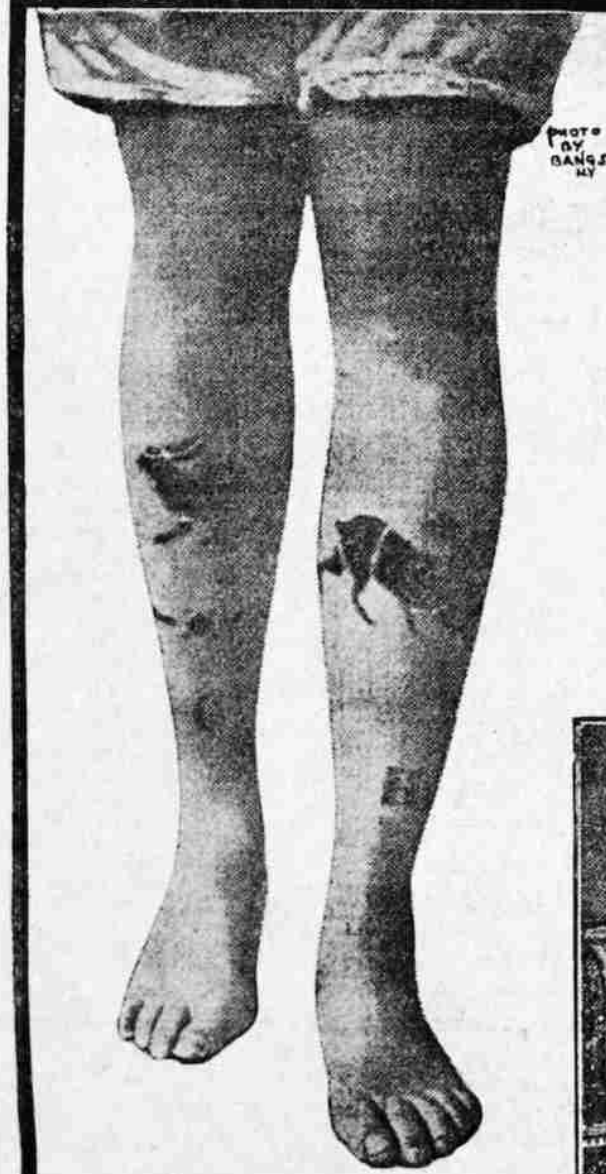
And then behold, along comes Polaire who has studied her feet, who has made them different. And every one starts up with surprise and says, "How wonderful, how charming, how different!"

I could be ten times uglier and they would still be enraptured. Genius is only taking the thing that everybody has and developing it so that it seems that no one else has it. Do you understand me? It is a deep secret that!

Now when I had mastered the first principles of my foot philosophy I said to myself: "What shall I do



"The feet can be made picture galleries, works of art, the whole focus of the toilette," says Mlle. Polaire. "Study their decoration possibilities as you would your hair, your hands, or your figure."



The Painted-on-the-Skin "Stockings" of Gertrude Hoffman, Which Mlle. Polaire Does Not Approve

with them?" I had a maid who massaged and cared for them, but it came to me that this maid could not do all that was necessary—no more than one's masseuse could pick out one's dresses. I said: "First of all, the feet must be kept most wonderfully shapely and beautiful. They are to be the background of my new decorative art. Sometimes I shall wear sandals, sometimes I shall go with them entirely bare. And so they must be pink and white and firm and shapely." Well, that was easy.

Half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening, and often in the middle of the day, they are exercised and massaged.

Then, I said, I must have a maid who will look after my stockings, and the numbers of shoes and slippers and sandals I intend to get. She will do nothing else. It will be her task to do this perfectly. And then I must have a real artist who

will recognize as fully as I the value of my feet, and who will study effects, suggest things I may not think of, correct what faults, because of personal possession of the feet, I may fall into; and vulgarities or commonness, you know.

So I got these maids. But first I tried another little experiment. I got the prettiest little jeweled watch. I secured it to a slender garter just above my ankle and I wore it. The success of that simple idea! How it conformed me in my thoughts! Within a week there were dozens of watches being so worn, and the name of Polaire had an added lustre.

So encouraged I mapped out my feet, part by part. We studied the effect of this in this place—of that in that. We went over them inch by inch and bone by bone. You

cannot believe until you try it what complexities develop themselves. Think of the infinite variations one can get from the simple octave! Think then of what variations one can get with ten toes, two ankles and so on, with slippers and no slippers, stockings and no stockings, sandals, shoes—oh, the infinity of it!

I have many dear friends. I had miniatures painted of them and set in the most beautiful anklets and bands. And those I use now and then when I think well of them and desire to wear sandals. It would not be aesthetic nor in good taste to wear these miniatures on my neck, or in my hair, or about my forehead in a fillet. But how they adapt themselves at once to my feet! I can raise them and look into their faces. And how they are set off there!

I had dozens of special slippers and shoes made. I had them painted by the best artists in Paris. I had them jeweled and embroidered after designs I desired. And then I had my dresses built in harmony with my feet. Was not this intelligent?

One should either wear stockings or wear none. If they wear none, the ornamentation should be apart from the skin. Bracelets, jewels, bijous of various kinds can be placed upon it—but to paint it! I shudder!

My feet are fixed with a definite idea always. I have two little dogs that I love. I have had their miniatures painted. When I go out with my dogs one or both of my slippers or shoes has a buckle on it which holds in a circle of diamonds and rubies their miniatures. I have my Greek moods. In these I don sandals. I wear upon two or more toes some beautiful, especially designed, rings. They are thin and flat at the bottom so that they do not hurt the skin. Around my instep is clasped a linked chain with wonderful old cameos set in it. About my ankle is a cord of gold, severely classical in outline. This is my right foot. My left is not dressed just like it. Not at all. Each foot should supplement the other. They should not show barrenness of invention by both being the same. On



"I never touch my feet with my own hands," says Mlle. Polaire. This Photograph Shows Her Particular Shoe Maid at Work.

gent? I think so. If it is the feet that are the test stone, the foundation of the toilette, why should not the toilette be built up on them? How foolish to start from the roof of the house and build down!

I had stockings made for me in the same way. I cannot agree with Miss Gertrude Hoffman in her idea of painting les jambes. I do not like that. It offends me. One should either be natural purely or don the embellishments to the natural. One would not paint a pearl or embroider fine lace. The skin of feet or les jambes is both pearl and fine lace. Its greatest charm is itself. It can be used as a foundation, a background, but it should not be mixed directly with the ornamentation.

the other ankle is perhaps a broad band of antique enamel. I may wear no rings at all on the toes of this foot. But running down to meet the sandal, between the great toe and the next, will be a string of glittering gems!

Sometimes in mixed moods I wear a slipper and a sandal. But whatever I wear is for a purpose and as carefully thought out as a picture. Make your feet a feast for the eyes, is the keynote of my philosophy.

It is an opportunity woman has too long neglected. All I can do now is to give my sisters a mere hint of the possibilities. I beg them to think it over well. We cannot be really efficient so long as we think of our feet as merely utilitarian things.

Neglected Opportunities for Unusual Adornment Revealed to Women in a New Philosophy of Pedal Decoration



Mlle. Polaire with Her Two Favorite Terriers, Whose Pictures She Wears on Her Slippers.

Why Queen Mary Is Her Most "Taking" Majesty

London, March 18.

"HIDE the silver! Turn the pictures toward the wall! Take off your jewels and pack them away! Tell James and Jerry to carry the old Thirteenth Century armchair up into the garret, for Queen Mary may be here at any moment," screamed the Marchioness of Landsdown.

"I have just received word from the royal messenger that Her Most Taking Majesty will do me the honor to stop over an hour on her way past the castle." The guests were not startled. They looked at each other in a knowing way, and one noble lord was heard to chuckle to himself, "My word! Taking Majesty, that is good."

Some sympathetic glances were turned toward the Duchess of Devonshire.

"Tell us about it," implored the Countess Fitzwilliam of the Duchess, taking a chair near her.

The story was then whispered that has been making all court circles buzz for a fortnight.

It is King George's great delight to shoot grouse on the moors around Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire, on the estate of the Duke of Devonshire. After one of these hunting trips Queen Mary came to get him and return to Windsor Castle together.

The Duchess of Devonshire has one treasure that has been the envy of all her friends—an old Sevres tea pot, perhaps the most exquisite that the famous French manufacturer ever turned out.

By some unlucky chance the Queen passed through the sala containing it, and, of course, made straight for it. She did not praise it, she went wild over it. It is still the custom in England that when a Queen remarks a thing, especially in an admiring way, it must be offered her immediately. Queen Mary seems to have a special knowledge of this inexorable law, and, worst of all, she never fails to take advantage of it.

Imagine the consternation of the Duke, who was standing behind the Queen at the time when he saw his noble spouse had no intention of complying with the unwritten law! The Duchess quickly turned the conversation, remarking about some old Charlin paintings hanging on the walls which it was her idea to get rid of shortly.

The Duke tried in vain to catch her eye over the Queen's shoulder. She would not look. A cold perspiration covered his whole body like a filmy cloak. Such a breach of etiquette was unknown in royal circles.

No, she would not look, and the poor Duke felt his knees giving way and bending like the blades of a jackknife. A last effort for an imperative signal that would force the Duchess to proffer, then and there,

the precious china; he blew his nose so loudly that every one jumped like corn in a popper. The Duchess alone seemed oblivious, of course, willfully so, of this agonizing situation, and deliberately led the way into the adjoining salon.

After Her Majesty's departure there was a scene.

"Why did you not offer Queen Mary that tea set?"

"She shan't have it," sobbed the Duchess.

"She shan't have it, I say. I am willing to hand over my pink diamond necklace, she may carry off the old stove on which Richard the Lion-Hearted warmed his companion feet, or even my old Fifth Century Byzantine jewel case that King Edward gave me right before the coronation, but the Sevres ware she must not have. I like it more than anything I have or could ever hope to have, and"—

"Enough of this rot," started the Duke, "the law is the law. And so it turned out. On the reflection after her grief—a grief that was akin to anger—wore of the Sevres tea set was duly packed and shipped with a note of a box of meant submissive compliments to the honor, joy, etc.

Queen Mary is making a name for herself. It is said she has already landed more stuff in the last months than a half dozen queens gather in a lifetime.

The knowing ones say that the Countess Fitzwilliam is one of the heaviest sufferers from the Queen's exaggerated appreciation of the beautiful—expensive.

The amount of old Irish lace, mine, furs, pearls and other jewels the fascinating young Countess has given up has largely reinforced her royal wardrobe, while articles of rare furniture and even a couple of priceless paintings that had been in the family for centuries have been overlooked by the grasping Queen Mary.

A funny story is being told about the inner court set of Countess Fitzwilliam's exasperation when Queen Mary had her hold the long escape over half an hour at a reception. The Queen had only ten it away from her the week before.

The Queen doesn't limit her activities to the nobility of the peerage. While in Delhi, India, at the coronation, she visited the wonderful collection of fine Sevres and brought back with her one of the greatest treasures concealed there, "The Sacred Perseus," a steel and gold, which she has placed in the British Museum, so she can see it at will.

Poor old Schweitzer has never been covered from the blow. The Queen admired. It had to be given.



A French Cartoon of Polaire.